



PTTC HHS REGION 9
Pacific Southwest



Policy in Practice

How Prevention Leaders Drive Healthier Communities

February 26, 2026



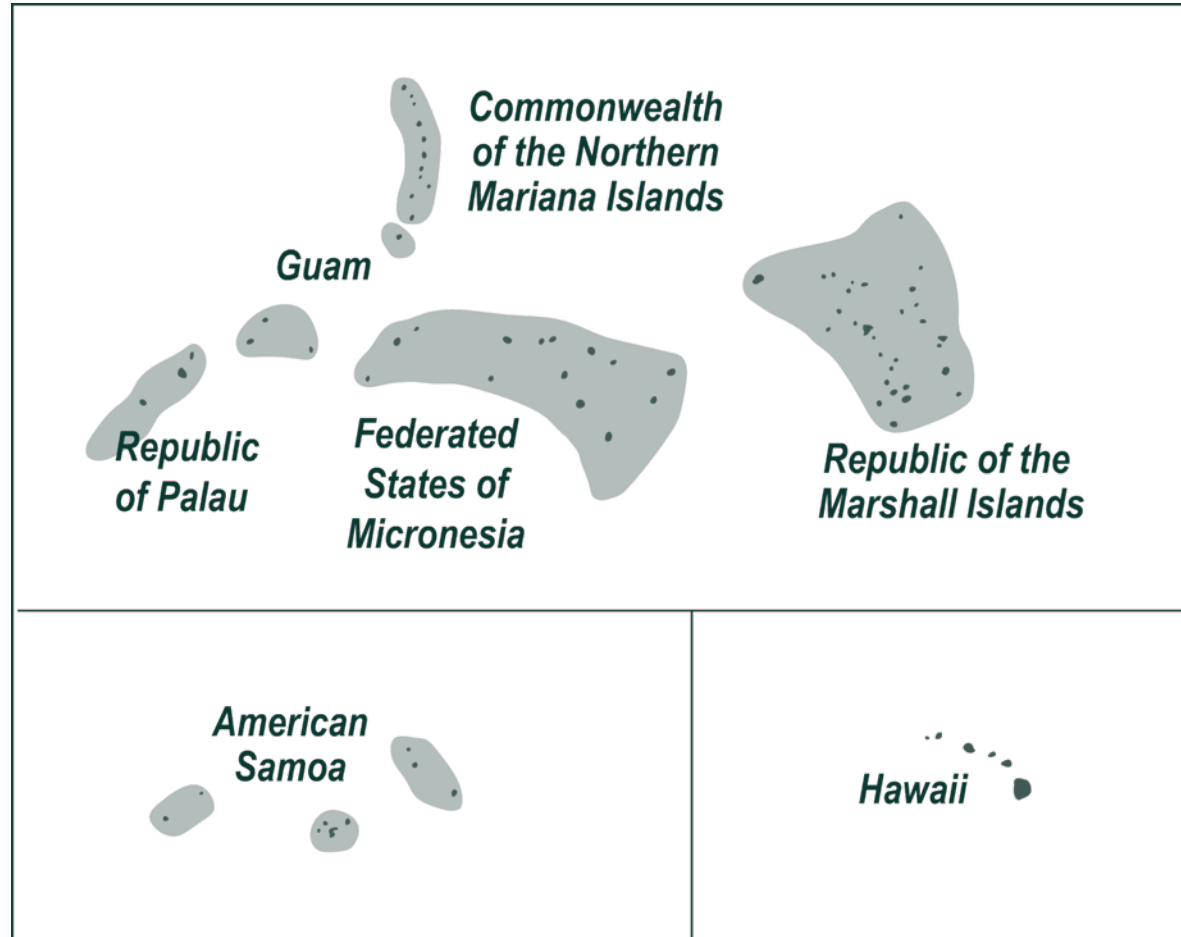
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Pacific Southwest



Housekeeping

- Chat feature
- Q&A feature
- Webinar recording and materials
- Certificates of attendance



Policy in Practice: How Prevention Leaders Drive Healthier Communities



Tempe Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking and Drug Use



Policy in Practice: How Prevention Leaders Drive Healthier Communities

- Tempe Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking and Drug Use
- Serving Tempe, Chandler, and parts of Phoenix Arizona
- Bernadette Coggins-Director
- Topic: Tobacco Ordinance



Who We Are

- Community prevention coalition
- Reduce youth risk behaviors
- Awareness, Education, Advocacy
- Vision: All Tempe youth living at their full potential.



Why Policy Matters

- Programs impact individuals
- Policy impacts systems
- Sustainable, long-term change
- Reduces access & shifts environmental norms

Data Driven Decisions



Arizona Youth
Survey



8th, 10th, 12th
graders



100% district
participation



Increase in past
30-day vaping

The Local Problem

- Flavored products appealing to youth
- Easy retail access
- Enforcement gaps
- Direct impact occurring at our local schools.

A Youth Voice Changed the Conversation

- 17-year-old hospitalized
- Severe reaction to vape
- Shared story publicly
- Community impact



The Ordinance

- Raised tobacco age to 21
- Required retail license
- Compliance monitoring
- Penalties & revocation possible

Building the Policy

Coalition partnerships

Youth & parent advocacy

Media campaign

City council engagement

Impact & Lessons Learned



Policy shifts norms



Licensing increases compliance



Education + enforcement together



Ongoing monitoring essential

Applying This to Your Community

- What does your data show?
- Who is at your table?
- Where are enforcement gaps?
- How can youth lead?
- Policy is prevention at scale.



- For more information contact:
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Policy in Practice Webinar

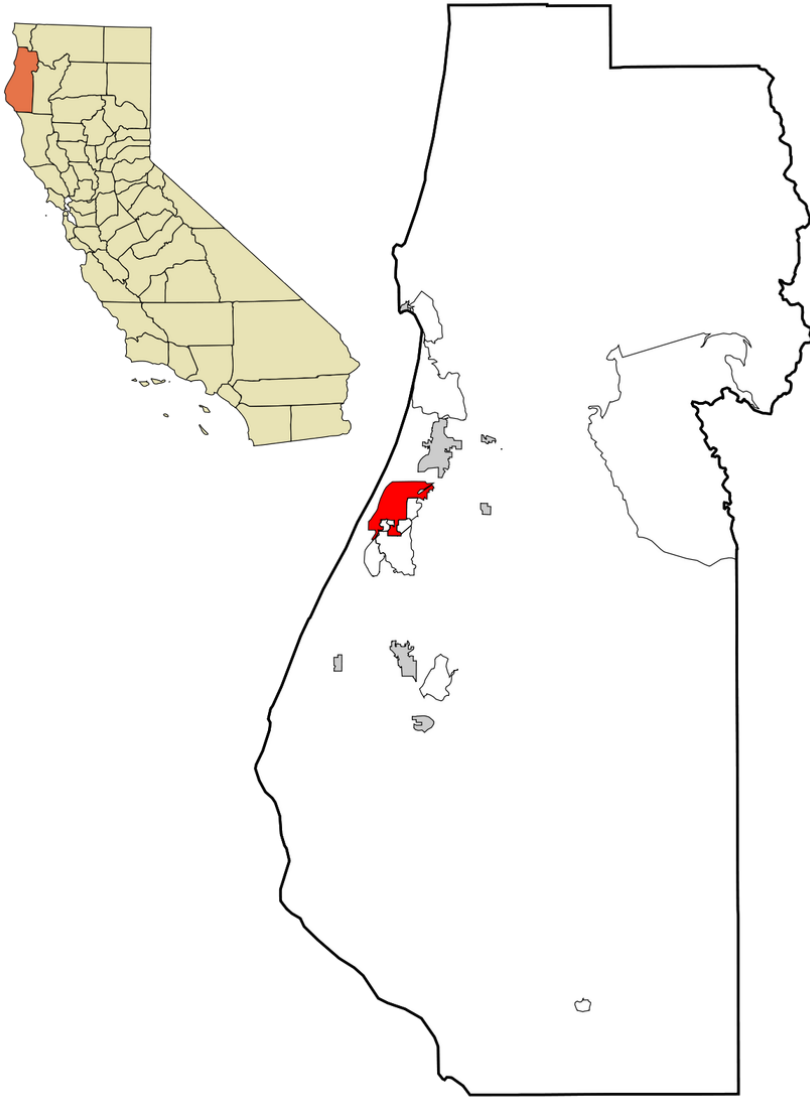
Humboldt County's Recreational Nitrous Oxide Ordinance Policy Work



February 2026



Humboldt County: Prevention in the Heart of the Redwoods



- Northwest corner of California
- Rural, frontier and micropolitan areas
- Heart of “The Emerald Triangle” of cannabis cultivation in California
- Rugged and remote system of redwoods, rivers, and coastline
- Transportation and technology can be an issue
- Access to health care and other services can be an issue
- Population: 132,380 (2024)
- Race and ethnicity (2024)
 - Non-Hispanic White (71.0%)
 - Hispanic or Latino (14.4%)
 - American Indian and Alaska Native (6.4%)
- Seven incorporated cities: “The Seven Cities”
- Eight federally recognized Tribes
- Largest population of Native Americans living in their ancestral homelands.

Recreational Nitrous Oxide Use in Humboldt

- According to the 2021-2023 California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) Humboldt County Secondary Report, 4% of Grade 7 and Grade 11 students reported that they have already used inhalants (California Department of Education, 2023).
- In the 2021, “Your Thoughts on Substance Use in Humboldt County” survey, young people and community members highlighted that nitrous oxide misuse and litter should be a priority area for our prevention work.
- In May 2024, a fatal pedestrian collision involving a driver under the influence of recreational nitrous oxide occurred in the City of Eureka, Humboldt’s county seat.



Photo courtesy of: Lost Coast Outpost; July 8, 2024

Humboldt Community weighs in about policy work



Clever LoCO Pollz infographic using Whitney, the mascot for Whip-It brand Nitrous Oxide products. Whip-It brand products can be found throughout the Humboldt retail environment.

Photo courtesy of: Lost Coast Outpost; June 3, 2025.

- LoCO Pollz! is a popular online forum for Lost Coast Outpost readership.
- June 3, 2025, Poll: "Do you think that Humboldt Governments Should Ban Nitrous Oxide Sales?"
- 1,881 community members responded.
- 67% respond: "Yes. The environmental nuisance caused by all the discarded little whip-it canisters is one thing. More concerning is the rise in people negatively affecting their health because of their addiction to the high nitrous oxide provides. **This is the right move.**"

2024-2028 Substance Use Prevention Block Grant (SUBG) Nitrous Oxide Logic Model

Information Dissemination

Community presentations to parents and general community

Create print resources for community members, parents and policy makers

Health fairs and other community-based tabling events.

Community- Based Process

Key Informant Interviews with policy makers and key stakeholders

Focus groups

Produce and publish Recreational Nitrous Oxide Retail Landscape Analysis Summary Report (also environmental).

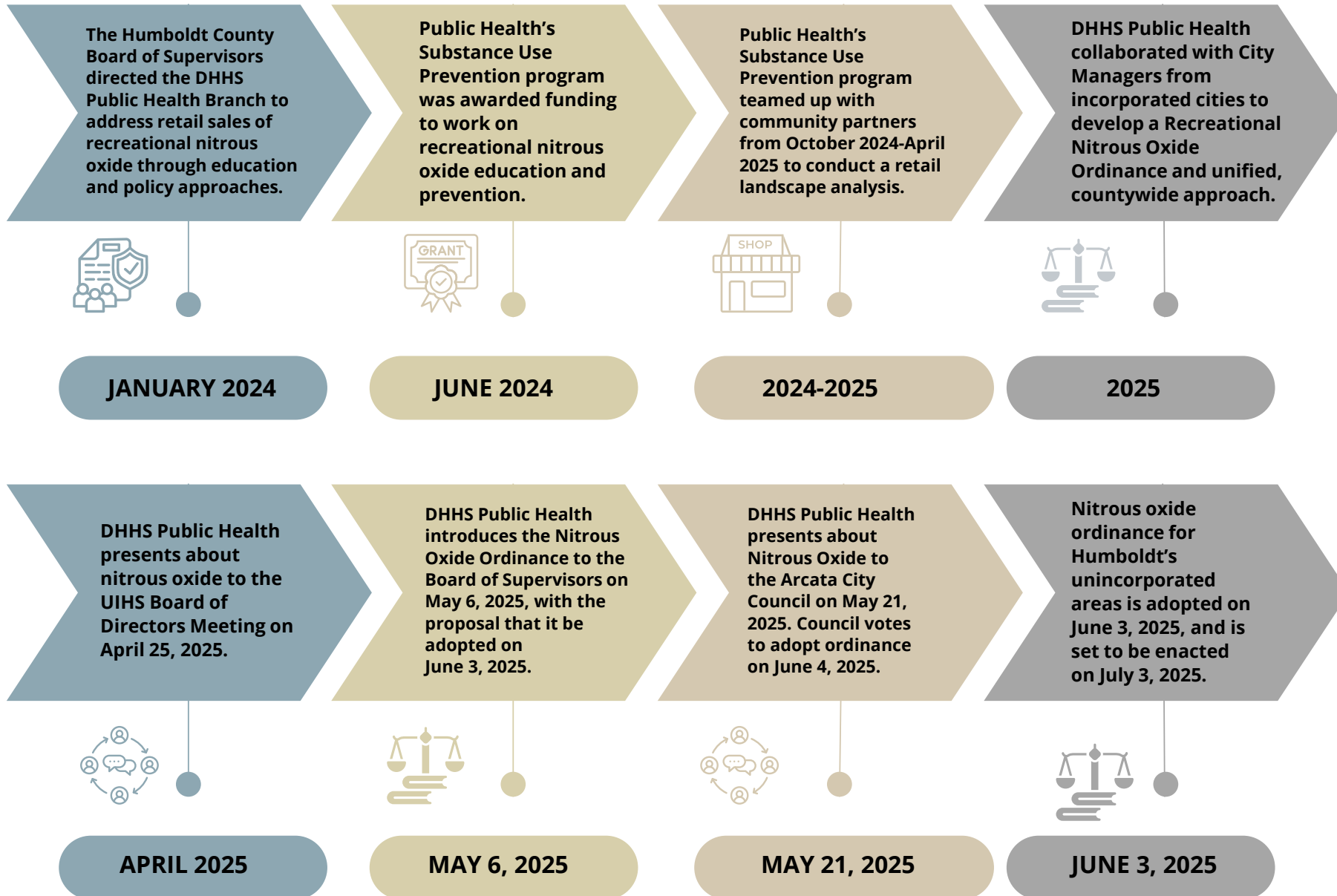
Environmental

Comprehensive retail landscape analysis throughout every jurisdiction in Humboldt County

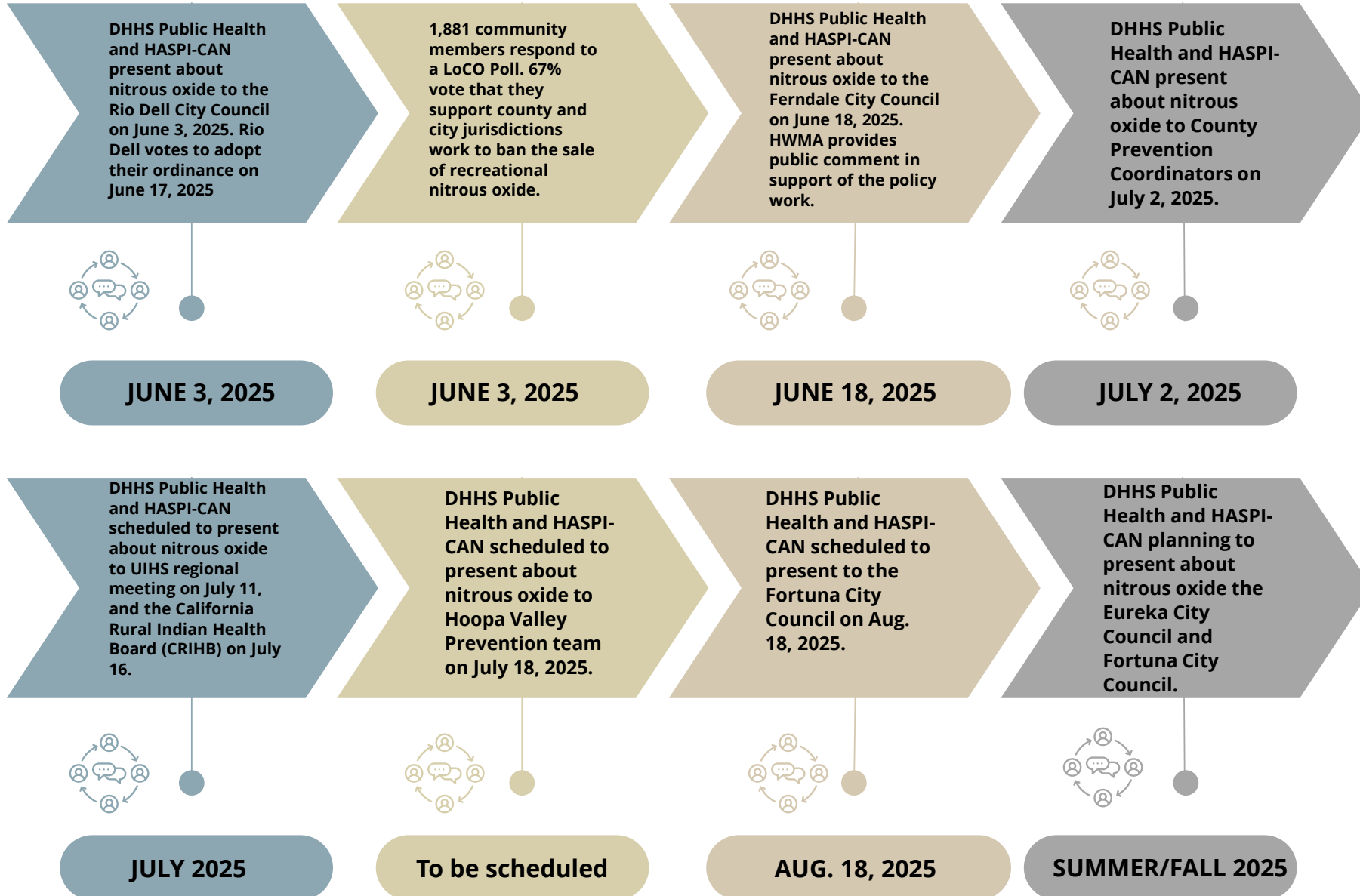
Present results of retail landscape analysis to policymakers, law enforcement departments and other key stakeholders

Work throughout Humboldt County jurisdictions to support work on Nitrous Oxide retail ordinances.

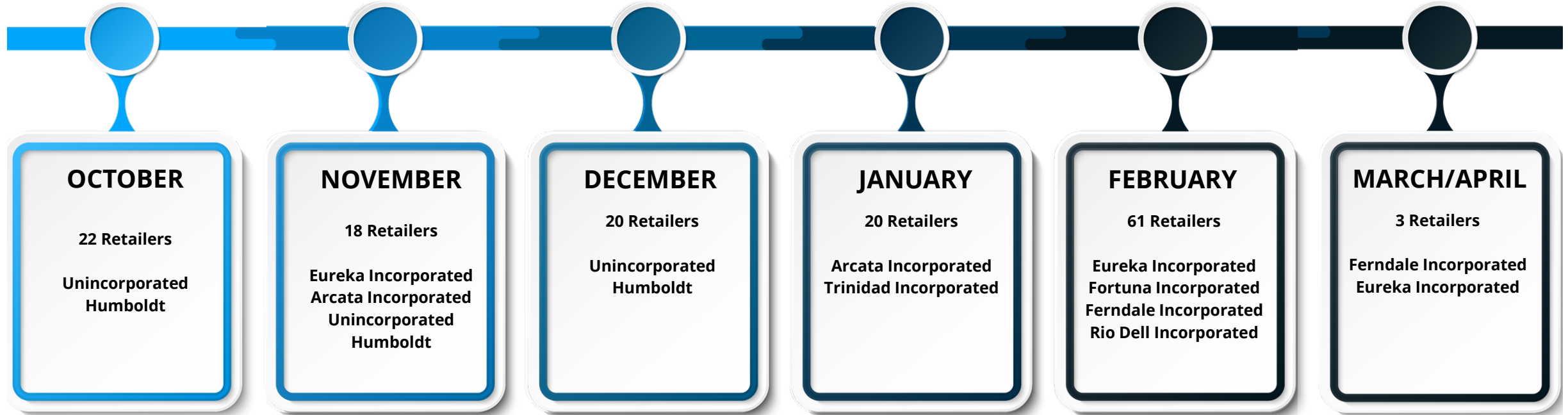
Implementation Timeline



Implementation Timeline Continued

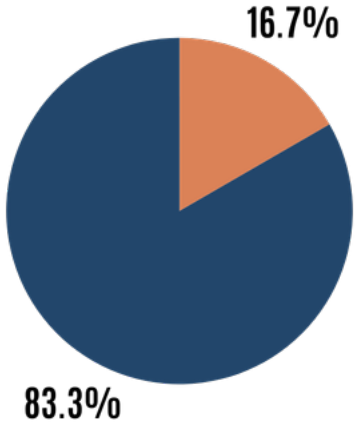


Observation Timeline



Public Health and HASPI-CAN completed 144 retail observations from October 2024-April 2025. This work included observations in unincorporated and incorporated Humboldt and did not include observations in tribal areas.

Recreational Nitrous Oxide Landscape Analysis



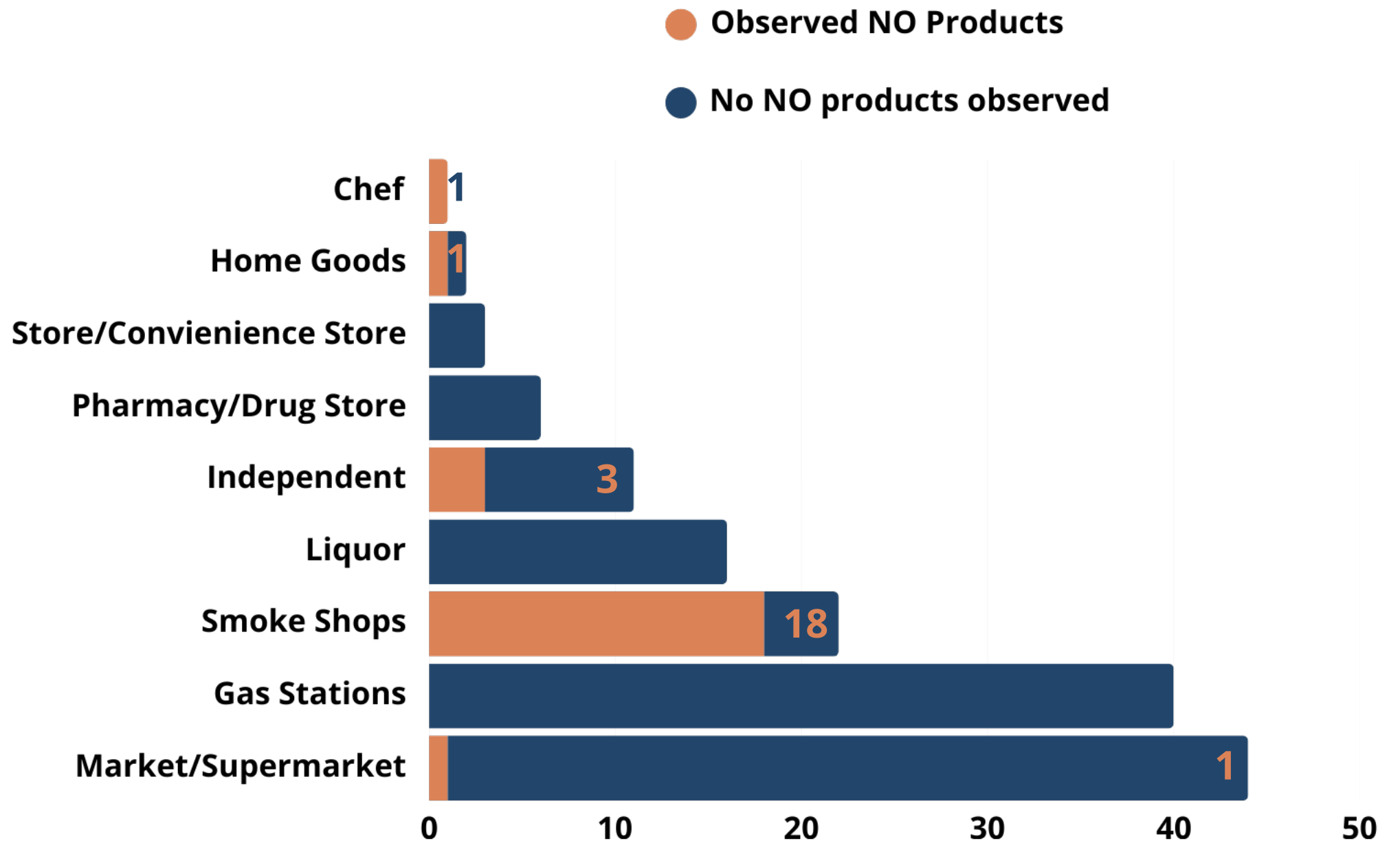
Staff observed nitrous oxide products in plain sight at 24 of 144 retail outlets.



18 retail outlets had crackers, canisters and tanks
5 of the outlets only had crackers and canisters
1 only had canisters.



Staff disclosed the nitrous oxide observations at 34 of the 144 retail outlets the team visited (24%).



Independent retail outlets include sex shops, glass shops, non-traditional tobacco retailers and variety or general stores.

Key Findings

- Recreational nitrous oxide products are readily available and located in plain sight in most jurisdictions in Humboldt County.
- The majority of retail outlets that sell recreational nitrous oxide products are smoke shops.
- Fringe stores selling nitrous oxide products included one neighborhood corner market in a residential area, two glass blowing shops and one sex shop.
- Throughout Humboldt County, recreational nitrous oxide products are available in close proximity to school sites and other youth-serving organizations.
- The retail outlets selling nitrous oxide also have a variety of flavored nicotine and tobacco products on their shelves.
- The community, including retailers, have anecdotally shared that other retailers are likely selling NO in back rooms or behind closed doors.
- Throughout Humboldt County, there are retail outlets with a wide variety of unregulated psychoactive products containing **Kratom, CBD, psilocybin, stimulants** and **male-enhancing compounds**.



Packaging for “Great Whip” brand mini and large sized nitrous tanks, found in Fortuna at a busy apartment complex of families with young children.

Policy Development

- Closing loopholes in state Health and Safety Code
 - For example, no enforcement mechanism
- Protecting youth through limited accessibility
- Enforcing local, state and federal laws, as applicable
- Local control, local community building
- Unified policy approach between unincorporated Humboldt County and city jurisdictions
- Recent local policies in Humboldt County
 - Tobacco Retail Licensing Ordinance (July 2023)
 - Unincorporated Humboldt, City of Eureka, other cities considering
 - Commercial tobacco use
 - Nitrous Oxide Ordinance
 - Unincorporated Humboldt, cities of Arcata, Ferndale and Rio Dell (June/July 2025)
 - Cities of Eureka (October 2025) and Fortuna (December 2025)
- Connect with UIHS Board of Directors to consider how DHHS-Public Health and HASPI-CAN can support local Tribal communities in NO work
 - Reciprocal and collaborative work on policy approaches when there's interest from both parties
 - Focus on upstream prevention, protecting youth from harmful substances.



Nitrous oxide is available in small to extra large tanks at retail outlets throughout Humboldt. Some tanks contain flavored NO.

County of Humboldt NO Ordinance Provisions



Various brands of nitrous oxide tanks.

Photo courtesy of: Mad River Union; KLH | Union
March 13, 2025.

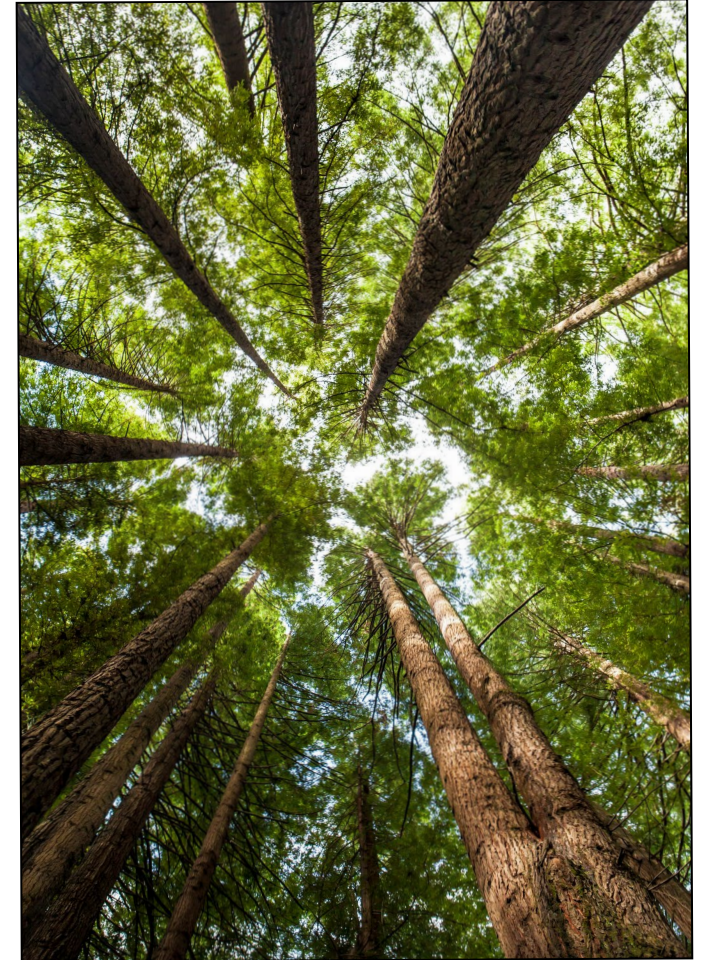
- Ban on sale of NO and associated paraphernalia in Humboldt County
- No exceptions for
 - Culinary
 - Automotive
 - City jurisdictions have exemptions for wholesale distribution to businesses and automotive exemptions
- Permissible for use
 - Health care, dental, pharmacy
 - Contained in food product for use as a propellant
 - For example, packaged, canned whipped cream
- Enforcement
 - Misdemeanor
 - Public nuisance
 - Revocation of business license
 - Revocation of tobacco retail license.

Acknowledgement

Special thanks to all the retailers who have been very helpful allies to this work and have provided useful anecdotal information to guide our work. The DHHS-Public Health team appreciates you!

Additionally, thanks for the support from the following community partners and agencies:

- Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
- Incorporated City Managers
- Health & Social Policy Institute: Communities Addressing Nicotine (HASPI-CAN)
- United Indian Health Services (UIHS)
- Humboldt County Sheriff's Office
- Eureka Police Department
- Rio Dell Police Department
- Fortuna Police Department
- Humboldt Waste Management Authority
- DHHS-Public Health's Division of Environmental Health
- DHHS-Public Health's Nicotine and Tobacco Prevention program.



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Humboldt County Recreational Nitrous Oxide page: humboldt.gov/NitrousOxide

References

California Department of Education (2023). [California Healthy Kids Survey: Humboldt County secondary report, 2021-2023](#). WestEd.

Lost Coast Outpost (July 8, 2024). [DUI suspect in fatal Eureka collision admitted to using nitrous before driving, says EPD](#). Lost Coast Communications.

Lost Coast Outpost (June 3, 2025). [LoCo Pollz: POLL! Do you think Humboldt governments should ban nitrous oxide sales?](#)

Maui Coalition for Drug Free Youth



Contact Information

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Post-Webinar Feedback

Please click on the link in the chat to complete a very brief online feedback form!

Thank you!



Upcoming Events

Building Readiness to Adopt Community-Level Alcohol Policy

March 3, 10, 17, and 24, 2026

3:00 pm to 4:30 pm Pacific Time

Pacific Southwest PTTC and San Diego-Imperial Valley HIDTA 2026 Youth Prevention Institute

April 28 – 29, 2026

San Diego, CA

International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC)

This webinar is under these domains:

- Planning & Evaluation
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Thank You!



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